



## **Lower Mystic Regional Working Group**

**May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016**  
**Mass DOT Offices, 10 Park Plaza**  
**9:00 AM – 11:30 AM**  
**Draft Meeting Summary**

### *Action Items from the meeting*

- CBI will send out the April meeting summary for review
- CBI will finalize process protocols
- The working group will provide edits and suggestions to the April meeting summary by May 25
- CBI will revise the list of related studies to include the Sullivan Square Disposition Study, the North Station Transportation Action Plan, and the Union Square Plan and will add in a column noting the completion date of the studies
- CBI will share the presentations given during the May 18 working group meeting
- CBI and the internal LMRWG team will develop a visual way to show the link among regional changes in employment, transportation, and land use
- The working group will notify CTPS regarding active or recent construction projects that could be missed in the exiting conditions scenario
- The working group will provide CTPS comments about intersections to subtract and add into the modeling runs, which includes minor intersections in Charlestown to model potential cut-through traffic
- CBI will refine public engagement plan and potential tools
- The working group will notify CBI of public engagement staff it should contact

### *Notes from the meeting*

#### **Objectives:**

- Finalize products from the April 11 meeting (protocols, schedule)
- Confirm “No Build” scenario key assumptions and land use differences for Alternative 1
- Gain a common understanding of the microsimulation model and review proposed intersections for analysis
- Discuss: “What is an alternative?”
- Discuss public engagement for Fall 2016

## Key Discussions:

### *Wrap up from the April meeting:*

Pat Field, CBI, noted that CBI would send out the April LMRWG meeting summary for review by the group following the meeting and highlighted the project's new website<sup>1</sup>.

Mr. Field also noted that CBI spoke with Secretary Pollack about the final process protocols and subsequently added more detail to the process protocol recommendations and retained the system in which the five members will provide final consent and both members and participants will continue to voice their full opinions and concerns. Some, particularly Wynn Boston Harbor, voiced a preference for the entire working group to have the ability to participate in the consensus decisions, especially given some participants' financial stake in the process. Mr. Field also said that the protocols allow CTPS to limit direct queries from the group if it becomes overwhelmed with requests. The working group agreed to adopt the protocols, with CBI finalizing them before the June meeting.

Mr. Field then provided the group with an update of existing studies related to the LMRWG and directed them to an online list (see prior plans document on LMRWG website). The group asked CBI to include the Sullivan Square Disposition Study, the North Station Transportation Action Plan, and the Union Square Plan and add a column noting the completion date of the studies.

Tim Reardon, MAPC, showed the revised study area, highlighting the addition of Charlestown in the scenario focus area and inclusion of several TAZs in Chelsea. The City of Boston requested that the regional impact area be further extended into the North Station area, particularly to North Cambridge and Washington Streets.

### *Confirm the "no build" scenario*

Mark Abbott, CTPS, confirmed the projects in the "no build" scenario in the 2030 and 2040 models. These include all LRTP projects, SIP mitigation projects, and the Wynn Casino Final Section 61 Finding. Boston MPO's amended plan, including GLX adjustments, will be incorporated into the modeling effort when completed by the end June.

The discussion included the following main points:

- Boston will try to include its updated Sullivan Square planning in the no build if possible given the schedule and approved by MPO, otherwise this information could be included as an alternative.
- The proposed tunnel could be excluded from the no build, so alternatives could highlight its presumed benefits and justify funding.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.massdot.state.ma.us/planning/Main/CurrentStudies/LowerMysticRegionalWorkingGroup.aspx>

- The no build scenario should include financially realistic developments, though one goal of the alternatives is to identify potential funding sources.

*Land use assumptions:*

Mr. Reardon clarified land use assumptions. RTP municipal totals for population, households, and employment will be maintained. The municipal control totals will be maintained in the baseline scenario and adjusted in the alternatives. In addition, distribution of development within municipalities will be adjusted to reflect latest development information. Mr. Reardon then showed a map of projected housing and commercial development in the study area and explained anticipated projections for employment (including jobs generated by Wynn Casino), households, and development growth. The discussion included the following main points:

- Most of the displayed development is in the projected phase, while more speculative projects are discounted. In some cases, there is a discrepancy between the projected square feet of additional development and employment, as some future measures are not discounted.
- MAPC has received new municipal development data within the last month and will continue to incorporate in new data when available. Everett's work with MassDOT to relocate growth is not shown in the displayed projections but will be incorporated into the new plan.
- As Everett has less completed development planning than Boston and Somerville, the projections, which rely on planning data, may underestimate future development in the city. Thus, the group will need to determine a realistic development envelope or range for the city.
- Land use assumptions will be cataloged and viewable, and specific development pipeline assumptions will be shared with municipalities.

*Modeling 301 - Microsimulation:*

Mr. Abbott introduced the two main software packages that will be used for modeling. TransModeler will be used to model traffic on the I-93 study corridor while Synchro will be used to model local intersections. The TDM model will provide inputs for both of these software to together model holistic traffic patterns. Mr. Abbott then displayed the 68 proposed intersections, including seven complex (multiple) intersections, for modeling. He noted that the intersections shown should allow for comprehensive analysis of traffic in the study area and that intersections Northwest of Boston should capture regional traffic patterns before entering the city. He explained that CTPS could model additional intersections but would need to exchange out one for one a proposed intersection. The modeling discussion included the following main points:

- Synchro can be adjusted to model signal priorities and BRT lanes (using work around techniques).

- The team will conduct transit analysis, including the Orange Line, in addition to traffic modeling. The modeling effort will focus on larger areas and timeframes to understand regional impacts and patterns.
- Synchro modeling can account for future planned infrastructure. Group members should follow up with the planning team to ensure it is up to date on these projects to ensure they are not missed in the existing conditions run. Though, the team will be using data from 2013 or newer in the models.
- The Fast 14 Project has Synchro data that could be valuable to the planning team and will be shared with it.
- Given the connections among regional trends in jobs, transit, traffic, and employment, it could be useful to have a simplified chart showing how they connect together for both the working group and the public. CBI will develop a chart to demonstrate this.

The intersection discussion included the following main points:

- The working group members should provide CTPS comments about intersections to subtract and add into the modeling runs by May 27.
- It could be important to model intersections south of Washington Street Bridge and those down from Keeney Square in Boston. Keeney Square itself might be more important to model than Leverett Circle, since Keeney will be undergoing major changes. Other studies have also examined Leverett recently.
- Minor intersections should be modeled in Charlestown to capture the possibility of increased cut through traffic, particularly on Main Street.
- It is important that intersection 24 ABC is included as it is a major approach to Sullivan Square.
- It may be worthwhile to remove intersections 4 and 50 and model the Lombardi Intersection instead.

*What is an alternative:*

Mr. Reardon began by defining an alternative as an internally consistent combination of assumptions about future conditions with outcomes that can be estimated and compared against other scenarios. In the LMRWG models, there will be three types of assumptions that can be combined in various scenarios: infrastructure and transit service conditions; transportation demand management programs and policies; and land use and demographics. The group must consider the financial assumptions of the scenarios to ensure they are fiscally viable or at least plausible. The discussion included the following questions and suggestions:

- The group could consider using 2040 as the main forecast year since there might be more infrastructure given increased funding at that point and then model the top 2040 scenarios in 2030 instead of the opposite approach.
- Some scenarios have prerequisites that need to be factored in for additional assumptions to be included. For example, the Orange Line cannot be expanded without the installation of a modern signal system.

- The sharing economy (Uber, Lyft, etc.) is expanding rapidly and should be modeled. However, much of this change is still speculative and would be difficult to model. The final plan could at least include a statement recognizing the expansion of this sector.

*Fall 2016 public engagement:*

Mr. Field reviewed the public engagement handout providing ideas for different methods for engaging the public and explaining the need to engage the public during the project instead of afterward to allow for response to input. The discussion included the following questions and suggestions:

- The group should try to adapt outreach mechanisms to gather input, especially tapping into existing efforts and tools, such as GoBoston, to reduce costs. Group members should also inform CBI of their in-house engagement staff that could help with the process.
- Public engagement could focus on regional connections to forge unity and reduce village-centric thinking, but this approach could risk a tyranny of the majority to the largest and loudest local voices. It could be promising to have people engage locally and think regionally.
- Ideally, any large regional meeting would be supplemented by smaller meetings and non-traditional, more targeted engagement.
- Events should be interactive and fun, include live streaming, possibly use Everett's call-in software, and include multilingual engagement.
- Before engagement begins, the group needs to focus on its desired end goal for the public process.

*Review action items and next steps:*

Ms. Hulet reminded the group that the next full group LMRWG meeting will take place on June 13 from 9:00 to 11:30 AM. The June meeting will focus on the various mitigation strategies to include in the modeling effort. Ms. Hulet also informed the group that she will be taking a leave of absence with Griffin Smith ([gsmith@cbuilding.org](mailto:gsmith@cbuilding.org)) continuing to support Mr. Field in the facilitation effort. Following the June meeting, CBI will set longer deadlines for the cities to respond to requests to account for their budgeting processes.